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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH OFFICIALS BRIEFED ON MISSILE DEFENSE

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) Deputy Director BG Patrick O'Reilly briefed Turkish military as well as Defense and Foreign Ministry officials April 2 on the Iranian ballistic missile threat and the U.S. Integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System. BG O'Reilly's presentation addressed coverage by long-range interceptors and emphasized our intention that the proposed system be NATO-compatible, stressing that Russia is being kept fully informed. MFA officials questioned why some NATO members appear to enjoy a "free ride" under the U.S. national system and asked for details on how the system would be integrated with NATO. The briefing provides an excellent baseline for future conversations with Turkey on missile defense and contributes to our ongoing dialogue with Turkey on the security implications of a nuclear-capable Iran. End Summary.

¶2. (C) BG O'Reilly's April 2 TGS briefing in Ankara was hosted by Turkish General Staff MG Serdar Savas, J-5, and included officials from the TGS and Ministry of Defense. MFA officials, including the DDG for NATO Affairs Serdar Kilic and Arms Control Department DDG Ahmet Muhtar Gun, also attended. O'Reilly explained why Poland and the Czech Republic were the best locations for ground-based interceptors and the mid-course tracking radar. The briefing also made clear why Turkey, because of its proximity to Iran, does not fall under the umbrella of the U.S. system.

¶3. (C) The MDA team also emphasized U.S. efforts to keep Russia informed regarding the capabilities and purposes of what is a small, defensive system not aimed at Russia. OSD/P Principal Director Richard Davison underscored the extent of U.S. exchanges with Moscow to demonstrate that the system is not a threat to Russia.

¶4. (C) Following the presentation, MFA officials raised questions about the proposed system's integration into NATO. NATO DDG Kilic asked why some NATO members appeared to get "a free ride" by virtue of their coverage by Poland-based land interceptors without having to make any financial investment. He asked rhetorically how this would affect alliance solidarity. Arms Control DDG Gun questioned the proposed system's compatibility and integration with NATO. Another MFA official asked how the proposed U.S. system would impact the missile defense feasibility study underway at NATO, and whether the U.S. plan might preempt NATO's development of its own long-range missile defense system. O'Reilly described how the proposed system can enhance NATO security, stressing its compatibility with NATO message sets and systems software. The U.S. objective is to match and link to NATO systems, thus increasing their capabilities.

¶5. (C) Comment. The briefing provides an excellent baseline for future conversations with Turkey on missile defense and contributes to our ongoing dialogue with Turkey on the security implications of a nuclear-capable Iran. Turkey has published Requests for Information (RFIs) for long and medium range air defense systems but it is not clear how far along Turkish thinking is on integrated missile defense. Officials requested that the MDA team not brief the Turkish press and have given us other indications they prefer that bilateral missile defense discussions remain low-key. While cognizant of the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran, Turkey is reluctant to draw attention to itself and irritate Russia and neighboring Iran. Despite this, word of the MDA briefing did appear in the Turkish media April 3, presumably based on MFA or TGS backgrounding. End comment.

¶6. (U) The substance of this cable was cleared by BG O'Reilly.

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